



The Sherry Picker



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Chapter 1 by Josh Van-duh Wally

He's an odd sort, the Sherry Picker. Picky about his sherry, he is. Very picky. He won't drink sherry picked by anyone else. Has to pick it himself. Even if you showed up to dinner with his favorite sherry, he'd turn it down, call it a bad year or some nonsense. Really it was just that he hadn't picked it.

He and Brandy Picker hang out a lot—usually in liquor stores. They met at a liquor store, in fact. Sherry Picker was picking sherry, and Brandy Picker, brandy. Guess they recognized a fellow discerning palate. Started talking about what they look for in their respective drinks.

Gin Picker, he's a wannabe. A groupie. The Pickers had seen him since before they'd met each other. Every night he'd come in and grab a bottle off the lowest shelf. Way he looked, he was drinking it alone. The very opposite of a discerning palate.

Guess he must have come into some money somehow—dead cousin or some such—'cuz he started creeping his way up the shelves. He'd made it about second from the top when he introduced himself to the Pickers.

"Hey, guys," he said. "I've heard y'all chattin' for a while now, and I gotta say, I'm impressed with the, uh, subtleties and, er, nuances y'all notice. See, with gin..." and off he went. Boy didn't know a goddamned thing.

They tried to shake him. Changed liquor stores three times. It took the kid a few weeks to catch up, but he always did. Finally they just gave up and went back to the store where they'd all met

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Still, it wasn't all bad. At the third step, the user, through the Scotch Picker, Scotch Picker was a good 'ol boy. But he moved

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but for the most part we don't hear much. Last I heard, he'd started picking bourbon. Poor bastard.

Me? Well, I'm just the validator. See, they never drink each other's liquors—too picky. Me, I'll drink anything. So they come to me, looking for an outside opinion. They can count on me to praise their carefully considered selections. Meanwhile, I get drunk as shit every Friday for no more than the cost of a couple shitty pizzas. (For as picky as they are with their booze, they'll eat goddamn anything.)

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